



HIGH SCHOOL DAYS

Classes

Many high schools require each student to earn at least a certain number of credits during the four years of study in order for him or her to be able to graduate.

Some courses are required: for example. 4 credits of English, 2 of Science, 2 of Math etc. There's also a number elective classes which the students can choose to take, such as foreign languages.

Each student, assisted by a school counselor, registers for each class in a particular semester. Usually about 6 subjects are chosen each semester. A freshman (1st year) student may choose to take the following classes in his first semester: English I, Freshman Science, Math I, World Geography, Physical Education (PE), and Consumer Education.



Photograph by Barry Fitzgerald,
Department of State

Grades and Exams

High school students are graded on a scale from A through D. There is also the F grade which means "fail." A Grade Point Average is calculated for each student every semester.

Students who plan to go to college should take either the Scholastic Aptitude test (SAT) or the American College Test

(ACT), which are offered several times a year. Both tests are intended to measure what the student has learned in high school and his or her potential for college-level work.

PERIOD	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:15 - 9:00	English I	English I	English I	English I	English I
9:05 - 9:50	World Geography	World Geography	Consumer Ed	Consumer Ed	World Geography
9:55 - 11:25	Math I	Math I	Math I	Math I	Math I
12:00 - 1:30	Freshman Science	Freshman Science	Consumer Ed	Freshman Science	Freshman Science
1:40 - 3:10	PE	PE	PE	PE	PE

Lunch

Students may bring their own lunches to school or get something to eat at the school cafeteria. Usually there is a main course and some extras to choose from: vegetarian lasagna + fresh fruit or vegetable, bread, or milk. Some states or schools try to fight obesity in students by banning sugared sodas and sweets from school cafeterias and vending machines.



USDA Photo by:
Ken Hammond

Graduation

Graduation week, which is usually in June, brings with it a mix of feelings and emotions for those who are about to depart school. Nervousness over final exam results, elation that the pressure of studies is just about over, sadness at pending separations from close friends, and excitement about what is coming next. Students sign yearbooks, empty their lockers, and prepare for the graduation ceremony.

Adapted in part from Department of State Electronic Journal "American Teenagers (July 2005) available at: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0705/ijse/ijse0705.htm>



Photograph by Barry Fitzgerald,
Department of State

■ That's Phat!

"How much skril you pay for those kicks?" - if somebody asked you that question, would you know what they meant? Well, an American high school kid would know. In high school slang "**skril**" means money and "**kicks**" are shoes. Look below at some other American high school slang words.

crew or set -
a group of
friends

I wish mom
would let me
hang out with the
crew tonight...

bummer -
an unpleasant
situation

This pop quiz is a
real bummer!



Photo by the U.S. Census Bureau,
Public Information Office (PIO)



Photo by the U.S. Census Bureau,
Public Information Office (PIO)

Guys,
I'm
hungry,
let's go
get some
grub!

This place is dull,
let's bounce!

True
dat!



(AP Photo/Tina Fineberg) ©AP/WWP

bounce - leave

true dat - so
true

Photo by the U.S.
Census Bureau,
Public Information
Office (PIO)

guy - a man; but:
guys - may refer to a
group of people, even all
females

grub - food

U.S teenagers' slang online

Track That Word!

[www.pbs.org/speak/words/
trackthatword/](http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/trackthatword/)

Slang Dictionary

[www.thesource4ym.com/
teenlingo/index.asp](http://www.thesource4ym.com/teenlingo/index.asp)

Wassup with Teen Talk?

[www.naa.org/artpage.cfm?
AID=5197&SID=1129](http://www.naa.org/artpage.cfm?AID=5197&SID=1129)

■ U.S. High Schools and Universities

Unlike Any Other

Zoom asked a Spaniard high school student who spent some weeks in the University of Berkeley, California last summer about her experience.

My Experience in the University of California at Berkeley

I would like to tell you about my experience in the University of California at Berkeley during the last two summers. For me living in Berkeley was a dream that became true...being there was absolutely incredible and a great experience. Now when I hear the word Berkeley I immediately smile. It brings me lots of good memories and it is a synonym of happiness. Walking across the campus is really special because you have a strange feeling of revolution. Berkeley during the 60s signified quite a lot, it was where important events like the **Free Speech Movement** took place. Have you ever thought about where the hippies first appeared? Yes! It was at that University campus in the Bay Area.

What impressed me a lot the first time went there was its multiculturalism, there were people from all over the world all living together with a common feature: their love for that beautiful place. I can say that I've never met a person that has been to Berkeley and does not want to return again. A lot of people including myself are working really hard to have a chance to get into UC Berkeley. Unfortunately, it is not easy. However, nowadays international students are being accepted more.

If you go there you can take courses and stay on the campus. There are lots of places to live; for example, I used to live in one of the residences. It was great! The atmosphere there is really cool and you get to know a large number of students, and with some of them eventually you'll become close friends. These residences provide you with different facilities like **lounges**, computer centres, laundry rooms (from where I could even see the Golden Gate Bridge), and nice rooms. You can choose between a double or a triple room, and each room has a telephone which you can use to call home if you ever feel **homesick**. As for dining there are lots of different choices, like Asian restaurants, Italian, American, and Mexican among others. In academic terms I really recommend you take a look at their courses; you have classes such as Math, Psychology, Philosophy, Music, American Language and Culture, Physics.

In conclusion, if you ever have the chance to get into this cool university, please don't even doubt to go there, I can tell you that you will not regret being there.

Alba Blázquez



Language tip!

Free Speech

Movement = The Free Speech Movement was a student protest that began on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley in 1964 under the informal leadership of student Mario Savio and others. In protests unprecedented at the time, students demanded that the university administration lift a ban on on-campus political activities and recognize the students' right to free speech and academic freedom. The Free Speech Movement is often cited as a starting point for the many student protest movements of the 1960s and early 1970s

Homesick = unhappy at being away and longing for familiar things or persons

Lounge = a public room (as in a hotel or airport) with seating where people can wait

Activity Page

Win a Prize!

To win a prize answer this question:

What does PHAT (title on page 2) mean?

Send your answer to irc@embusa.es.

Give your name and address.

The deadline is February 15, 2006.

Good Luck!

The winners from the previous issue will soon receive their prizes by mail.

Find answers to activities on this page at www.embusa.es/irc/zoom.html

■ High School Vocab

Fill each blank with one of the following words:

all-girls, demerit, graduation, co-ed, science lab, textbook, grade 6, Petri dishes, and prom.

- 1 My entire family - both sets of grandparents, my parents, stepmother, two aunts, two sisters and a cousin - attended my _____ ceremony last Friday. I am the first in my family to hold a high school diploma.
- 2 Angela was such a smart and quick learner that she skipped _____ 11 and went straight into 12.
- 3 I thought he shouldn't have given me a _____ for forgetting my school blazer on such a hot day!
- 4 Unfortunately for my two sons, the best high school in our neighborhood is an _____ one.
- 5 We no longer use _____ in our science class. All experiments are computer-simulated.
- 6 Without any _____ his presentation on Baroque art seemed dull.
- 7 I didn't do my homework for today because all last afternoon I was working on the decorations for the senior _____.
- 8 The local chemical plant sponsored a completely new and modern _____ for our school.
- 9 Some schools are dropping traditional _____ in favor of e-books.
- 10 Some people would say that _____ schools are outdated and that competition between boys and girls creates a healthy atmosphere.

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About ZOOM

Zoom is online at
www.embusa.es/irc/zoom

Contact us at
irc@embusa.es

US Information Resource Centers

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Embajada de EE. UU.
C/ Serrano, 75
28006 Madrid

Barcelona
Consulado General de
EE. UU.
Pº Reina Elisenda de
Montcada, 23
08034 Barcelona

Discuss

What differences between a Polish and an American high school are you aware of:

- are you allowed to choose your subjects?
- is grade average calculated in Polish schools? What is it used for?
- do you have a lunch break? Can you buy snacks in your school?
- do you have something like a yearbook in your school?
- can you keep your belongings in a safe place such as a locker?
- do you celebrate graduation with a party such as a prom?
- do you have public speaking class? Do you think it is or would be useful?

■ Glossary

- close-knit** - held tightly together
- crooked** - not straight
- to drill** - to teach thoroughly
- elation** - pride
- elective** - optional
- to figure out** - to discover
- freshman** - a student in the first-year class of a four-year school
- junior** - a student in the third-year class of a four-year school
- obesity** - extreme excess of body weight
- pending** - that is to happen soon
- to reason** - to think logically
- senior** - a student in the fourth-year class of a four-year school
- soda** - a soft (non-alcoholic) drink
- sophomore** - a student in the second-year class of a four-year school